Flashback

Journal of the Washington County Historical Society
Volume 69, No. 1
Spring 2019

Historic Johnson Farm, Part II
A Legacy for Washington County

Washington County Historical Society

118 East Dickson Street, Fayetteville, AR 72701
http://www.washcohistoricalsociety.org

Submissions

Flashback (ISSN: 0428-5573) is published quarterly in the spring, summer, fall, and winter as an official publication of the Washington County Historical Society. Send all materials for publication to: *Flashback* Editor, Washington County Historical Society, 118 East Dickson Street, Fayetteville, AR 72701.

There is no payment for articles published in *Flashback*. The editor retains the right to edit all submitted articles prior to publication.

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Members are mailed *Flashback* each quarter. Available past issues are $6 each, postpaid. Add $1 postage for issues printed in 1951 through February 1972. Web site: washcohistoricalsociety.org or headquartershouse.org.

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Preserving our past for future generations

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On the cover

At Rieff's Chapel Community south of Fayetteville, a community-owned kettle could be used by the Johnson, Cato, Kelly, or any families in the neighborhood who wanted to make apple butter. Benjamin Franklin Johnson III (far left) works the 1915 cider press as a boy growing up like a tree among the Johnson orchards (at back). Photograph provided by Amanda Bancroft.

The Historic Johnson Farm: Preserving History and Ecology, Part II

By Amanda Bancroft

This article is dedicated to Ann (Johnson) Prichard, who keeps the door to the past open. Special thanks to her for sharing memories of her family for this article.

World War I: Johnsons and Mules

The year 2018 marks the 100th anniversary of the end of World War I. The Johnson farmhouse includes a fine collection of WWI memorabilia, from letters and postcards, photographs of the war, artifacts, etc.

Wayne and Wilton Johnson enlisted in the U.S. Marines on December 15, 1917, in different locations. Neither of them knew the other had enlisted on the very same day, and were surprised to discover it later. Wayne was called by his middle name to avoid the more German-sounding "Frederick." He

Wilton Johnson in his World War I U.S. Marines uniform.

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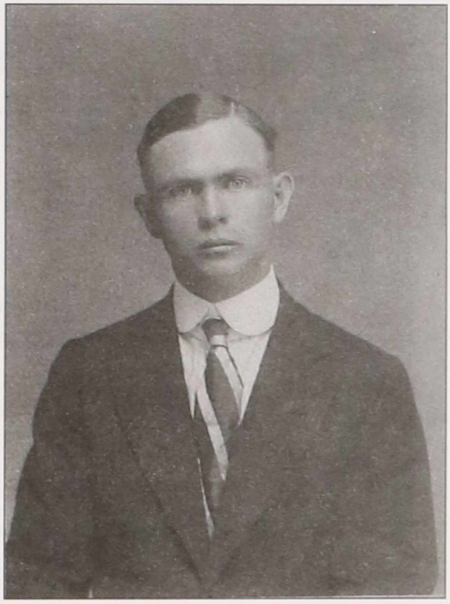
had worked as a railway mail clerk sorting the mail as the train traveled from town to town. The original mail slots he used to practice for the job are still in use today at the Johnson farmhouse.

Wayne was shot "going over the top" on June 25, 1918, in Château-Thierry, France. His name is part of a WWI memorial mural adorning a wall in the old Washington County Courthouse. The Johnsons can tell you themselves about what they experienced during WWI in the following excerpts.



Frederick Wayne Johnson just before he enlisted in the U.S. Marines for World War I.

Near the beginning of the war, on August 24, 1914, Rachel Johnson wrote: "I often think of the poor mothers over there who are mourning their boys. It seems so sad that some have sacrificed so much to raise their boys to manhood, then they are sent out and shot down."

Wayne wrote to Eva in one of his last letters home:

May 12, 1918
My Dear Eva,

I thought I would write you to let you know that I had not forgotten that today was your birthday. Also today is Mother's Day and all the boys over here wrote home. I am getting along fine over here and getting plenty of good food to eat. I brought your box of candy with me over here. I surely enjoyed it. I saw Wilton a month ago today. He is looking fine. He has been promoted. We were together all the way over here. Franc [sic] *is a beautiful country and we have had some ideal summer weather. The fruit trees are now in bloom and they remind me of back home. I have seen many picturesque old chateaux and cathedrals over here. We get lots of figs and*

dates to eat. I want you to write Lenora and tell her that I want her to go to school this fall. Is she going this summer? Give Arthur my address and tell him to write to me. Be sure to remember what I told you about Lenora going to school. Write me and tell me all the news.

-Private Frederick W. Johnson
16th Co. 3rd Batt
5th Regiment
U.S. Marines A.E.F.

Rachel wrote a detailed account of which only a small part is copied here:

In 1913, Wayne received appointment as Railway Mail Clerk in which service he continued till December 1917, when he resigned from this position and applied for enlistment in the U.S. Marines at Memphis, Tennessee, and a few days later was mustered in as a member of the 68th Co. A. at Paris Island, South Carolina. After ten weeks' training here, he was sent to Quantico Virginia as a member of 134th Co. 2nd Replacement Battalion and went overseas in March 1918. His last letter home was dated May 19th, 1918 and gave his address as 16th Co. 5th Reg. U.S. Marines. He wrote, 'I am feeling fine. Have seen quite a bit of France. It is a beautiful country. I attended services this morning in an old Cathedral, it was very interesting.'

Nothing further was heard from Wayne till October 6th when it was officially announced that he was killed in action on June 25, 1918.

Wilton enlisted at St. Louis, Missouri, and was sent to Paris Island, South Carolina, for training as a member of 64th Co. U.S. Marines and later to Quantico, Virginia, with the 157th Co. 2nd Replacement Battalion U.S. Marines, and went overseas in March 1918. Although in different companies, the brothers met frequently till in April.

From a letter dated March 29, 1919, almost a year after Wayne's death, his brother Wilton wrote home that, "While we were on Paris Island Wayne used to talk much of Wynnie [Dearing] and while he never said they were engaged, I drew my own conclusions. After we got over and we realized that we would probably be separated he asked me to go

down around Bald Knob [where Wynnie lived] in case I ever got to go back. I wrote Wynnie soon after I wrote you last September." Wayne and Wynnie took several cute photographs together before the war, all stored at the farmhouse.

Wilton wrote home that Wayne "was brave and game to the end." When his mother Rachel heard the news about Wayne's death, she wrote this in a letter to Lenora on October 24, 1918: "Somehow Wayne had such a way of doing whatever he really undertook to do that I thought he would come back to us. Do not let your mind dwell on our sorrows. Think how proud he was to be with those who were going over 'the top' that fateful morning, and surely his sacrifice has brought his reward."

Farm Mules on the Front Lines

These two Johnson brothers and their two mules served our country together during WWI. There were two grey mules on the Johnson Farm, Bird and Belle, used to work in the fields and orchards, and ridden around the area. Each brother was allowed to choose which

B3 [Benjamin Franklin Johnson III] with mules (from left) Bird, Pete, and Belle in 1915. Bird and Belle had unusually white coats, and neighbors would comment on it.

mule he would work with for farm labor.

On March 24, 1918, Rachel wrote in a letter: "And say! Did the boys write you about Wilton seeing Bell and Bird at Quantico [Marines Military Base]? You know we sold the gray mules a little over a year ago. The buyer said they would go South for cotton mules but later told Papa he had sold them for war mules and now to think Wilton has seen them in Virginia hauling grand to fix up the camp!"

On November 21, 1918, Wilton Johnson wrote to his family while serving in the Marines: "By the way would you believe it, I saw old Bird a couple of days after peace was declared way up close to the front. She was one of a farm mule team on a ration wagon. Looked good all right." It is not known if Belle, like Wayne, did not survive. But we know that two brothers and their mules went to serve, and one brother and at least one mule saw peace.

World War I Humor

In 1919, Lenora Johnson sent home a letter along with two typed pages from her friend who worked in the War Department. It was entitled "Excerpts from letters sent into the War Risk Office Washington D.C." The following are just a few excerpts typed by Lenora's friend:

"I am writing you to know why I have never received my elopement."

"Please send me my allotment. I have a baby and knead it every day."

"I was discharged from the army for a goiter, which I was sent home on."

"You have changed my little girl to a boy. Will it make any difference?"

"My boy has been put in charge of a spittoon. Will I get any more money now?"

"I have not received my husband's pay and will be forced to lead an immortal life."

1920s: A Windfall for Farmers

The 1920s brought great changes to the Johnson Farm. The children were getting married. The Johnsons struck oil on investment

property they leased to oil companies in Oklahoma. Education and travel opportunities were now within reach, and the old two-room farmhouse was completely remodeled into a three-story home.

Wilton married Martha Finch in August of 1922, and adopted her sister's son Edward. Perhaps no surprise since he was always considered "the brainy one of the bunch." Wilton was valedictorian of his 1912 class, the second class ever to graduate from Fayetteville High School. He became the principal of the Skiatook School in Oklahoma from 1921 to 1926, then Superintendent from 1926 to 1945, eventually becoming a professor at Northeastern State Teacher's College in Tahlequah.

Arthur married Grace Josephine Kelly, a neighboring Rieff's Chapel community farm girl who lived in the Kelly home on the next farm over from the Johnson's. This is the same home of the "war hero" Thomas Jefferson Kelly and Elizabeth Rieff, John Rieff's daughter. (This home still exists today, although the roof has caved in.) Grace Kelly was John Rieff's great-granddaughter, and also Philip Kessler's granddaughter because her mother was Annie Kessler, Philip's daughter. Grace's Kelly family–who went to the Ozark Theater with the Johnsons, attended quilting and candy-making parties at the Johnson farmhouse, planted the Rieff's Chapel Cemetery maple trees, and was on the receiving end of Halloween pranks–were the grandchildren of Philip Kessler. Grace and Arthur were married on October 23, 1923, in Muskegon, Michigan.

On November 25, 1927, Rachel wrote to Eva about something like a double date between herself, B2 [B.F. Johnson II], Arthur and Grace.

> *I told Arthur about your present [of a new suit]. He looked rather blank! He said he had found a suit he liked pretty well at Price Walker's. I went with him to see it. He had picked a dark blue with a white pinstripe, said he had been wearing light colors till he was tired of it, put it on and it looked well. I think it is good material. The overcoat was $35, hat $8, shoes $8.50, shirt, socks overshoes and tie left $2. He did not tell Grace about it until last Tuesday when we went to see Ben Hur. He dressed up, we drove down after Grace and went out through the lane. He went in after her and when*

she came out she said 'I hardly knew this man of mine!' Then said she liked his suit fine, that he wore blue better than any other color and she thought Santa was getting around early. Papa made no comment at all as if he did not notice it. The show was good. How can they make the pictures look so natural? Papa enjoyed it.

The 1920-1924 Diary of B. F. Johnson II

B2 kept an infrequent journal for the years 1920-1924. It is a black leather notebook, rather beat-up and worn. Here is a selection of entries:

Reiff [sic] *Chapel Arkansas, Washington County, 5 miles SW of Fayetteville, Arkansas*

A.D. 1920 April 4 Easter Sunday – Freezing Rain with high wind from North. Temperature 16 Degrees. Pears in full Bloom and covered with Ice mostly killed. We had about 300 bushel pears this year, cherries were most all killed. But apples were not much hurt, they were just beginning to open their buds. The Ben Davis apples were about half crop. Other varieties were nearly a full crop. Pears sold for 1, 2, and 3 dollars per bushel. Apples sold for 2 to 3 dollars per bushel, culls $1.00 per bushel.

1921 April 20 – Bennie and I went to Fayetteville, took some sweet potatoes sold 1 bushel for $1.25 to Restaurant, and 2 or 3 bushels for $1.00 per bushel to stores.

1921 April 24 – Attended Sunday School 10am. 28 present. Clear and warm.

1921 May 1 – Brother Stockburger Preached at the Rieff Chapel today.

1921 August 15 – Farmer's Week at the U of A Fayetteville Ark.

1921 August 19 – Bought Dodge Car, Price $1,118.00 without bumper or chains.

1922 April 19 – Joe Walker Planted about 2 ½ acres of corn for me with his Planter on the NW corner of my 80 acre orchard Farm

1924 July 6 – We visited Eureka Springs Ark. Today. 6 of us Eva, Lenora, Wilton, B3., Rachel, & B2 [39]

Oil Boom in Oklahoma

The Johnsons were selling lots of fruit in the 1920s. A 1928 notebook lists all the apples sold that year, amounting to hundreds of dollars in income. However, the Johnson family's larger stream of income was about to arrive from the Oklahoma oil fields where they were leasing mineral rights, thanks to Eva moving to Seminole for work and investing in farms and fields there.

According to the American Oil & Gas Historical Society website, "Although the area's first discovery came near Wewoka in 1923, the Cromwell oilfield was developed in 1924, and leasing activity continued around Seminole, it was not until 1926 that the long hoped-for giant discovery was realized." Eva and B2 both invested in this boom early on, with Eva having gone to Seminole as early as 1912. "By 1935, the new oilfields around Seminole became the largest supplier of oil in the world. More than 60 petroleum reservoirs were found in 1,300 square miles – and seven were 'giants,' producing more than a million barrels of oil each." Historian Louise Welch wrote in her book *A History of the Greater Seminole Oil Field*, "At its height, the Seminole City oilfield accounted for 2.6 percent of the world's oil production."

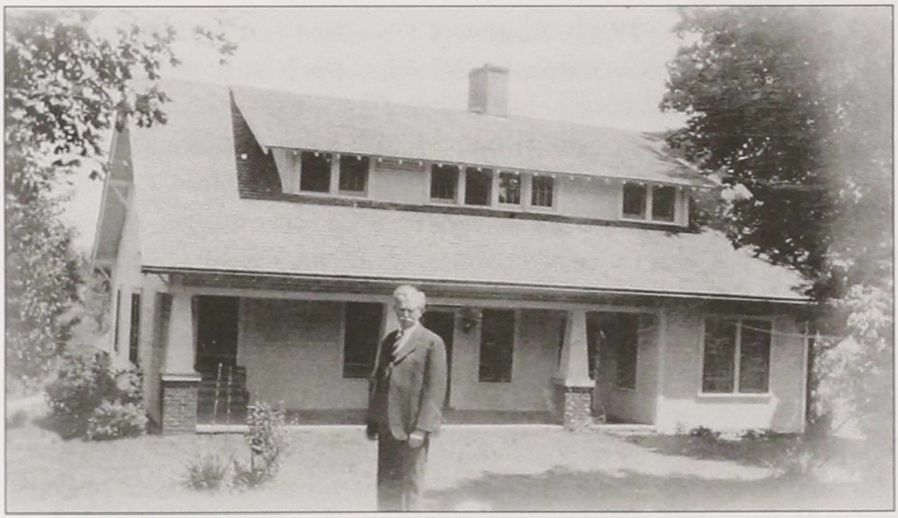
In a letter on October 20, 1926, Rachel wrote to Eva that people were interested in buying B2's one-fourth interest in his leased oil lands. One man from Tulsa offered $1,000 per acre, but B2 said he "did not care to sell." The amount was raised to $2,000 per acre, but still, B2 did not sell. It remains unclear which land B2, Eva, and other Johnsons owned and leased, and if they ever sold it. However, one legal document was found: on February 14, 1953, Eva signed a 10-year lease for oil drilling on 400 acres she owned in Arkansas, including the "Homeplace" of the Johnson Farm "for the sole and only purpose of mining and operating for oil and gas and laying of pipe lines, and of building tanks, power stations, and structures thereon…" Based on her businesslike personality and the fact that she never married, it seems like a fitting way for Eva to spend Valentine's Day! It is not yet known where, if any, oil wells were placed on these properties but considering that the Johnson Farm remains untainted today, it can be assumed that at least here the attempt was unsuccessful (fortunately).

The New Johnson Farmhouse

The Johnson farmhouse took several years to complete, and construction began around 1924. Some of the old farmhouse items were kept and used for the new house, such as four original doors painted using "milk paint." The outbuildings were kept mostly the same during this time. The house construction wasn't mentioned much in letters, but several of them discussed buying new bedroom furniture or complained about the noise from the carpenters. It remains unclear when exactly the farmhouse was completed. Construction projects appear to have been ongoing from the mid-1920s through 1933.

In memoirs handwritten by Anne Prichard, B3 recalled how the Johnsons raised the house to build a basement. "The east side of the house sat up above the ground about 3 feet. We just got a bunch of jacks–about a dozen–and raised it 3 feet more. First we dug about 3 feet of dirt out. We had a slip that would scoop the dirt out and dump it above the house, so we could have a full basement. Then the rock wall foundation was built, cement floor poured after the basement was dug. The garage door was built the same summer."

Just before Christmas in 1927, the Johnsons bought furniture in preparation for visitors over the holidays. Rachel wrote on December 15: "As we are expecting so much company, I went up town last Satur-



B2 standing in front of the newly constructed Johnson farmhouse.

day and got some new furniture. A walnut finish steel bed with mattress and springs similar to Papa's. Two nice little bedroom chairs. I could not find just the kind of dresser I wanted for the North room upstairs, so got a small walnut finish one that I thought would fit in very well downstairs when I do find the right one for upstairs."

Much later in life, when the Johnsons owned several town lots in Fayetteville, Arthur collected paving stones being removed from the sidewalk around the Fayetteville square. They were stored near the sweet potatoes until the 1980s, when the farmhouse front walk was installed by B3's grandson using these paving stones.

A Trip Around the World

Travel became an exciting possibility for Eva and Lenora Johnson. They booked a trip around the world to begin in January 1928, and the farmhouse holds a collection of their itineraries, travel journals, postcards, letters home, photographs, and souvenirs. They visited Japan, India, Egypt, Palestine, Constantinople, Athens and the Greek Islands, Venice, and many places in Europe as well as California. The following is a travel journal excerpt from the first page:

> *'The world is a great book, of which they that never Stir from home read only a page.'*
> *January 16, 1928 – Sailed on S. S. President Jackson of American Mail Line from Terminal Island – Los Angeles Port. Mrs. Woodruff, Dr. and Mrs Roe took us to the pier.*
> *January 17 – 10a.m. Arrived at San Francisco. Afternoon we went to the Customs House to see about passports.*
> *January 18 – Took grey line sightseeing trip. Had a magnificent view of San Francisco from the summit of Twin Peaks. Passed Mission Delores, founded in 1776 by Father Junipero Serra of the Franciscan Order. Built by the Indians. Tour of Golden Gate Park. Visited Presidio with view of Golden Gate at its narrowest and deepest point.*

Their two travel journals are packed with months of pages of exciting details about their trip and facts about the places they visited.

Rachel wrote on May 23, 1929, "Do you suppose the old mother bird has any idea of the places her young ones will go when they

Holding their umbrellas, Eva (left) and Lenora ride camels to visit the pyramids of Egypt in May 1928.

become fully fledged and able to fend for themselves? Well in this day of rapid and easy travel it is no wonder people go to far places. If it was by the slow and tiresome ways of the pioneers it would be more of an adventure to go a hundred miles than it now is to cross the continent."

Meanwhile, B3 was completing his education and would one day travel in Europe to study landscape architecture. B3 had attended elementary school at Rieff's Chapel School #12, then spent a short time at Grady School for 8th grade. He completed his secondary education at the University of Arkansas Training High School (Peabody) and earned a bachelor of arts degree from the Missouri State Normal School in Springfield in 1926. In 1930, he graduated from the Landscape Architecture Program at Harvard University.

In Rachel's letters, she mentioned that "Uncle Ben" (B1) would come over to the Johnson Farm and plow a few rows, apparently wanting to keep up the work of a farmer "as long as he could hold a plow in his hands." B1 died on April 22, 1929. The front page of the *Fayetteville Daily Democrat* ran the obituary that read: "Veteran Survives Battle Anniversary by Only Two Days. Funeral services for Benjamin Franklin Johnson, aged 94 years, veteran of the Civil War and one of the four

local survivors of the Battle of Fayetteville of April 18th 66 years ago, were held Monday morning at 10 o'clock at First Baptist Church."

Overall, the 1920s were a contented time for the Johnson family. Rachel wrote on November 14, 1928, "So far as I know about History, there never was a time in which I would rather live than right now, and who knows what great change the next ten years may bring."

1930s: Johnson Barn and the Great Depression

After graduation in 1930, B3 was eager to employ his newfound landscape architecture skills. He spent 10 months in Europe and Egypt "studying planning and development of Mediterranean cities" from 1930 to 1931. Work was difficult to find, so he remained at the farm from 1931 to 1933. He designed extensive rock landscaping on the north and south ends of the new farmhouse, including stone steps in three places. On the east side, he designed a pergola consisting of two stone benches and pillars which supported wooden planks that held up the grape vines and wisteria.

The Depression was experienced differently by the Johnsons, who had enough oil and farm money to sustain themselves and even thrive. The Johnson Farm became an important employer during the Great Depression because the family could afford to hire laborers to pick fruit, maids to help with housework, and builders to construct a new barn. They were not ignorant of others' suffering.

In their letters, Eva and the Johnsons would frequently write about loans given to family and friends. It got to the point where visitors were assumed to have come just to ask for money (and it was a pleasant surprise when it was only a social call). School loans were given, too, to help people complete college.

In several letters during the 1930s, Rachel would say, "People have not stopped talking about hard times, but when we're in town, there are always plenty of autos lined up." She suggested people stop driving to save money, or else their driving indicated that times weren't that hard. The Johnsons had done without a car for their early years on the farm, usually riding a mule, taking a wagon, or walking the five miles into Fayetteville. Today we would think of it as a ridiculous distance, but it was commonplace for them. It must have seemed unusual to Rachel to see so many people driving when they could have walked!

B3 had many jobs around the country, and designed places in Cincinnati, Ohio, Birmingham, Alabama, and more. In 1933-1934, he was Assistant Landscape Architect to the Genesee Valley State Park Commission in Rochester, New York. At a theater one night, he noticed the woman a few seats down from him laughing when he laughed, at all the same parts. This woman was Lilie Seymour Gordon of Oswego, New York. B3 married Lilie on July 21, 1934. The couple eventually settled in Houston, Texas, to raise a family.

Lilie Seymour Gordan Johnson as a young woman.

The dust storms blew over from Oklahoma around 1937. In their letters, Arthur complained that his car became covered in dust; Eva gave up any farmhouse cleaning and decided to do it all after the storms passed.

The Johnson Barn

One fateful snowstorm changed the old barn forever. On April 7, 1933, under the weight of an unusually heavy snowfall, the old barn collapsed. It is not known which of the previous farm families built this original barn, nor do we know if it was the first barn on site or if there were previous barns. Regardless, the Johnsons knew it was time for a new one.

B3 and Arthur traveled around Northwest Arkansas studying barn features and making sketches, with the goal of designing the best barn possible and combining the most efficient practices of the time. Oral history of the family says that fourteen local men were paid one dollar a day for thirty days, when the first load of hay was hoisted into the loft just a month after the furrows had been dug to receive the foundation stones. There are countless record-keeping books which list the names of the laborers and their wages, but nothing has yet been found

The new Johnson barn and livestock.

to pinpoint the names of the barn builders. B3's daughter Anne Prichard met one of the men, Greenland resident Efton T. Bohannon (1907-1997), whose first name appears in the mid-1930s record books as a hired hand. She recalls being told that he helped build the barn and work the farm. He is buried with family in Rieff's Chapel Cemetery.

The Johnson Barn was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1990.[40] The following was quoted from the summary information that accompanied its listing with the National Park Service:

> The Johnson Barn is a two story, balloon-frame, gambrel roof agricultural building. It features a rectangular, side-drive plan. It is supported by a fieldstone foundation, sheathed with wood weatherboard siding, and constructed with solid walnut columns on the first floor and long, unspliced truss members that frame the gambrel roof. The roof is covered with sheet metal. A square hay shute is placed centrally above the doors. The gable roof hay hood at the top of the elevation shelters a large, rectangular loading bay at the door of which features a hinged, triangular top that allows it to be raised more easily via a rope and pully system. The first floor has a dirt floor with

B3 and son B4 on Old Kate in front of the barn in October 1938.

the exception of the central crib, which has a pine floor like the second story loft. The upper story is accessed via a ladder in the southern crib which abuts the southern wall of the center crib.

The noted fieldstone foundation came partly from the old rock wall, and today there is a gap in it near the barn. The rock wall continues after the barn in parts of the woods along the wagon road. The workers used a low trailer to bring the rocks down through the orchard to the barn. A device that matches this description continues to sit near the barn today in the woods, near the 1940s Dodge car, wagon remains, orchard sprayer, and other farming equipment of bygone eras. The barn was actively used for farming purposes until the 1970s, but farming continued until the 1990s.

It has been a subject for many local artists and photographers, most notably George Dombek, a renowned watercolor painter and Arkansas native. The barn was also featured on local PBS station AETN's "Back Road Barns" program in the fall of 2016.[41]

Life and Death in the 1930s

In the midst of this flurry of construction, depression, and newly acquired wealth, B2 died on January 19, 1932. His obituary read "B. F. Johnson…orchardist, banker and oil man of Washington county, died today at Palm Beach, Florida, where he had been for his health for the past two weeks."[42]

In a letter to her daughter on February 4, 1932, Rachel wrote:

> *Now Lenora do not grieve, for you know that from little girls up you and Eva were good helpers to your father and although he did not often express it in words I feel that he admired your efforts and was proud of you. The boys were good to him too. While we all have our different opinions and expressed them sometimes, I feel that he was, and had a right to be, proud of his children. Now Lenora try to look on the brighter side of life. There are many good things in this world if we will only take time to admire and enjoy them. Let us not be afraid of the dark, but be thankful for the light.*

The orchards and work continued without B2. Eva wrote on November 2, 1935:

> *There are probably 150 bushel pears yet to sell and several apples. Pear have been slow sale. Lots of pears everywhere this year. The Kieffers grew quite a bit this last month, they were surely small in September. The Stayman Winesaps, Mammoth Black Twigs and Winesaps are better quality than last year, better size and very few worms, some specks but they do not seem to go deeper than the peel. I wish the 150 bu. pears were apples, they would sell quicker and at a better price. The best Stayman's and Blacktwigs are bringing $1.50 per bushel.*

In another letter from Eva on June 9, 1937, we learn about the

(Left) Rachel Johnson sits on a pergola stone bench, September 1933.

(Below) 1939 pergola, after construction.

cherry harvest: "The cherries took quite a bit of time last week. Two of Dave Cate's girls picked most of them, but I supervised the packing, canned a few and sandwiched some house cleaning in between acts. We sold 9 crates of cherries last week and 3 this week. We are keeping the cherries on the big tree by the house for our own use as they seem a little meatier."

But life was not all work and no play. Sometimes, there were surprises. Rachel wrote in a letter on May 6, 1937: "Mr. Trowbridge found a terrapin out somewhere near the school house that had writing on its back. B.J. 14-7-21 also 9-33. Arthur put 4-5-37 on it and turned it loose again. I wonder when it will show up again?"

Rachel died April 10, 1938, at the Johnson Farm, and is buried next to her husband in Evergreen Cemetery. While she did see her grandson, B4, she never got to meet her granddaughter, Annie. Current and former neighbors in Everton, Missouri, and Rieff's Chapel Community sent letters of condolence, all praising Rachel and revealing how much she was admired by all who knew her. Because Wilton was superintendent of the Skiatook Oklahoma Public Schools, school was closed the Monday of the funeral, and the teachers attended. Arthur said, "We had one of the best mothers that ever lived. No one ever had a better mother than we did."

Electricity didn't come to the farm until after her death. Eva wrote to B3 on June 30, 1938, that "we are thinking of accepting F.D.R.'s offer to put a rural electric line in. If three more accept, must have four to the mile. Would you be willing to sign an easement for a right of way across the home place?" From that year on, Eva, Lenora, and farm guests were able to enjoy their first Frigidaire, electric washing machine, and many other newfangled appliances.

1940s-1980s: New Generations

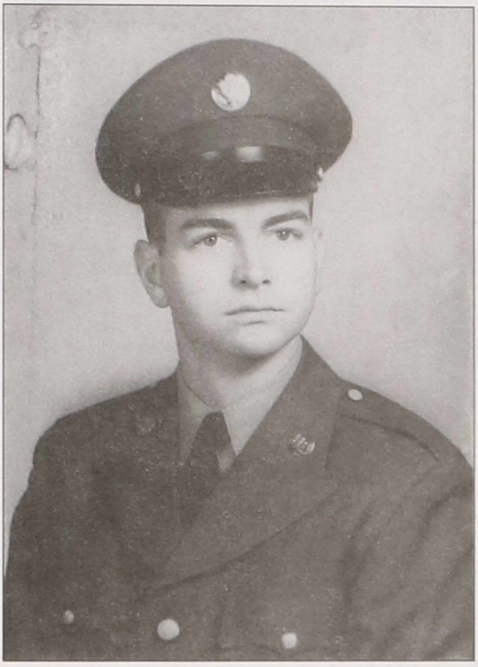
Rieff's Chapel Community became less and less active as fewer children were born and farms were bought up by neighboring farms, leaving fewer families. In the words of local musicians Don Matt and Scott Thompson in the song "Little White Church" from the album Tea and Honey: "Slowly they began to move away, to find a better life and start a brighter day. Those who remained, they stayed the same, but they grew older. It's a place that is grown up in memories, a place that is

(Left) B4 swings from a black walnut tree on June 13, 1939. This tree, now mammoth in size, remains alive and well.
(Above) Anne Prichard as a girl, gathering flowers on the Johnson Farm. As an adult, she became well-known all over Fayetteville for bringing flowers to people.

somehow so hopeful. It's a dream from a long time ago, and it asks you to have dreams of your own." As in the song, the daffodils still bloom around the stone ruins of former pioneer structures in the middle of the woods.

Almost as a hobby, Eva and Lenora would buy properties both in the community, in Fayetteville, and out of state. Lenora once owned the lot where Evelyn Hills Shopping Center now stands, as well as the lot in downtown Fayetteville where the fire department resides. Apparently delighting in fishing (Eva's fishing license was found), Lenora built a pond in the 1950s near Round Top Mountain (formerly Cate's Mountain). Although it leaked and had to be re-done, today "Lenora's Pond" is a wildlife magnet.

Meanwhile, in Houston, Texas, B3 and Lilie were raising B4



B4 in uniform as a young man.

and Annie. The children would sometimes spend summer vacations at the farm. Little Annie could be a delightful handful for her Aunt Eva, Aunt Lenora, Uncle Arthur, and Uncle Wilton. Once they asked Annie how she liked the farm, and she replied, "There's never a dull moment!" She switched all the keys in the farmhouse doors, which led to keeping the keys above her reach atop the door frames from then on. She played with barn kittens and gathered flowers in a basket. B4 and Annie also rode a pony named Pumpkin.

The children grew up, completed their education, and started families of their own. B4 graduated high school from St. Stephens in Austin, Texas, and received a bachelor's degree from Colgate University in Hamilton, New York. He served in the United States Army in Korea as an Air Evac Medic, and with the Arkansas National Guard Helicopter Rescue Unit. From the air, B4 noticed developments taking over formerly open green space and farms. This sparked a deep interest in conservation, and he became a member of Ozark Regional Land Trust. Over his lifetime, he donated large tracts of the historic farm to ORLT for permanent protection from development. In the spring of 1968, B4 planted eighty new pear trees of fourteen different varieties on a hill above the farmhouse, continuing the cycle of rebirth and harvest.

Anne completed her bachelor's degree at Mills College in 1959, and received her Master's in Library Science from the University of California Berkeley in 1965.

Over the years, she worked as an assistant to the curator at

Arthur Johnson on a tractor south of the house, during the years when he ran the farm.

Oberlin College, Ohio, and assistant art librarian at Smith College in Massachusetts. Anne married Joseph Birdsall Dallett on June 7, 1966, and the couple had one son, Timothy B. Dallett, born on March 14, 1967, in Ithaca, New York. At age 4, Tim moved with his parents to Ottawa, Canada, where he grew up and became an artist. Anne spent a year working in the library of Carlton University where her husband was a professor of German Literature and Language.

Meanwhile back at the farm, Eva and Lenora were living in the farmhouse and Arthur was managing the farm. The three of them worked together to keep things going, including the large garden and all the canning that needed to be done. Arthur was quite proud of his registered Hereford cattle and the fruit harvests. Arthur died on September 19, 1974.

According to a 1988 newspaper article by Anne (Johnson Dallett) Prichard, entitled "One Family's First Fayetteville Christmas," Eva had previously graduated from the Fayetteville Business College in 1912, earned her Bachelor of Arts degree from Missouri State Normal School in Springfield in 1920, and completed her Masters in Business

(Above) Mary Eva Johnson.

(Right) Lenora Ellen Johnson.

from Columbia University in New York in 1923.[43] She had such a mind for business that she was always starting a new real estate investment, oil lease, or loan grant with interest. Her letters get straight to business even in social matters, and she assertively made her opinions known to the family. She received a journal once, but apparently never filled it, claiming her thoughts "would not look good in print." Even though she earned nicknames at school that referenced her thrifty, almost scrooge-like mannerisms, she was a tireless caregiver to her family from the very beginning until the very end. She often commented on the irony that she had studied so hard and earned her business degree only to not put it towards much use, since she had to return to the farm to care for her aging parents. The "bank of Eva" handed out many school loans to college students hoping to complete their degrees, or farmers needing a loan to keep their farm going. Thanks to her business pursuits, the Johnsons managed to thrive financially. They could never have done it without Eva. She died July 2, 1962, leaving the farmhouse to Lenora's care.

In the same article cited above, Lenora's education was listed. She had previously obtained her teacher's certificate from the University of Arkansas summer school, received her bachelor's degree from

Abundant pear harvest 1967, at The Pear Farm, Fayetteville. Bennie picked the pears and brought them to the barn where Ben sorted them all day long. The westering sun came through cobwebby barn windows and turned all to gold. I chose this unposed picture of Be KODACHROME PRINT Christmas card, had 50 made, and few were sent. "We were all" otherwise Made by Kodak engaged." The orig. picture was DEC. 67 fine, and showed pasture with cattle, beyond open back barn door where Bennie brought tractor w. trailer and del. the picked pears. Hundreds of bushels went to waste because of labor not available. Orchard looks so much better, & bore better in '67! than when Ben began work on it. And Bennie's spring '68 Test Plot of 80 new trees on hillside behind house is proof of unremitting toil and forward thinking! LOVE TO THE LANES who are coming to see it all + us.

Lilie Johnson conscientiously labeled all sorts of family documents, such as the photo and written description above: "She often wrote what everyone was doing outside the picture as well as within the frame. She acted as a guide, making history known and describing it in wonderful ways."

1968 Summer hay bales waiting to be lifted into the Johnson Barn via a motorized elevator.

Missouri State Normal School in Springfield in 1916, and a Master's in Education from the University of Missouri in Columbia in 1918. She was a graduate student at Chicago University for the summer term in 1918, and completed all but her dissertation for a Ph.D. in Education from Columbia University in New York. "She taught at teacher's colleges in Virginia and Louisiana before returning to the farm," wrote Anne. Lenora often commented that she had no time to write many letters because of the farm labor she had to do daily, despite having hired help. She would fall asleep at the dinner table from exhaustion. Lenora died on January 7, 1965, and Wilton followed not long after, on October 3, 1966.

Lenora's death signaled another transition for the farm. B3 and Lilie would travel to and from the farm over the next several years, doing what they could until they both moved to the farm to spend their retirement years. B3 would put up signs along Cato Springs Road, and almost like a fruit drive-through, cars would drive up near the farmhouse front porch, where B3 would sell them pears. Some of these signs are still kept at the farm.

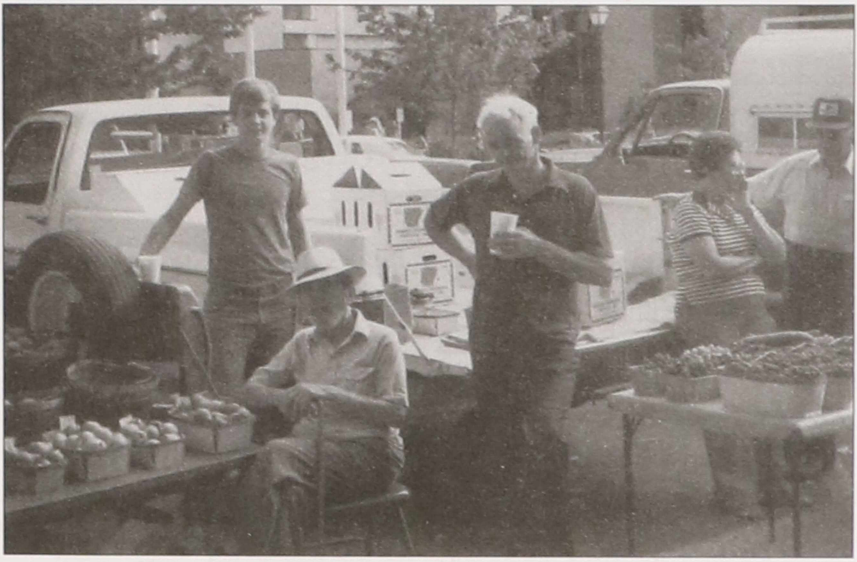
While living at the Johnson Farm, Lilie had the foresight to

B3 holds an enormous sweet potato at one of the first Farmer's Markets in Fayetteville, in 1974.

leave clues all over the house for future generations of researchers. Nary a photo, letter or box could escape her labels written in her beautiful handwriting. Plenty a puzzle has been solved when we weren't sure about the history of an object or area, and Lilie's thoroughly labeled photographs would turn up with more information than we could hope for. Beyond data and dates, her labeling seems uniquely useful because she often wrote what everyone was doing outside the picture as well as within the frame. She acted as a guide, making history known and describing it in wonderful ways.

Lilie died on September 20, 1984, changing her daughter Anne's life forever. Anne left Canada and came to the Johnson Farm to care for her father for the next six and a half years, maintaining the estate and preventing the farm from being sold. During her years at the farm, she worked as a reference librarian at the Fayetteville Public Library and as reading room supervisor in Special Collections at the University of Arkansas Fayetteville.

Many dozens of workers have helped keep the farm alive



(Clockwise, from top left) B3 in 1985 and the rock wall he designed in the 1930s.
B3 with his prize-winning pears at the 1986 Washington County Fair.
B4 loading bushels of fruit to sell.
Tim Dallett (left) and John Huffman standing with B3 (seated) selling pears at the Farmer's Market in Fayetteville in August 1985.

throughout the years. John Huffman was involved in maintenance projects and harvests from about 1985 to 1991. He was one of the last people to make cider on the old cider press [seen on the cover of this *Flashback*], and cider was sold at the Fayetteville Farmer's Market along with the fruit. Long Ago Antiques of Fayetteville has refurbished many of the furniture items from the farmhouse. Quinn Montana repaired the chicken house, nowadays called the pergola house, saving it from termites. The Johnson Barn was painted twice by the same business, Dependable Painter owned by Dyke Moiseichik, who painted it in 1990 when it was put on the National Register, and again in 2017.

Over a lifetime of visits to the farm, Anne's son Tim was active in many projects. He helped harvest and sell pears at Fayetteville Farmer's Markets, made repairs to buildings and roofs, and helped clear the trees on the pond's dam, using the limbs as cross-pieces for the pergola. These limbs are still in use today to hold up the wisteria vines. Tim is the fifth generation of Johnsons to care for the farm since B1's plowing days, and he continues to help out whenever he visits from Canada. He assisted the Northwest Arkansas Land Trust in the creation of the farm's conservation easement, protecting it in perpetuity.

1989 Pear Pond and Archeological Survey

In 1989, B3 and Anne had the pond built that B2 had always wanted. Pond construction was well-documented with photographs. A discovery was made while digging the hole, and the Arkansas Archeological Survey was called in. On August 7, 1989, Jerry Hilliard and David Coble visited the site and wrote the following in their report:

> Cultural Affiliations: "probably entire Archaic State (8,000 B.C. to 500 B.C.) possible Woodland Stage represented by Gary and Langtry points, few arrow points representative of the Mississippi Period (one Reed observed), Pioneer Agriculturalist"
>
> Anne Dallett [Prichard] called Hilliard stating artifacts and stains were being exposed by a bulldozer during construction of a pond. The pond will be fed by the Cato Springs. The family recently had the spring flow

tested which generates 13,000 gallons of water per day. Al Hatch, the dozer operator, halted work in the immediate area of the stains while David and I shovel-shaved and trowelled these areas. We immediately discovered historic ceramics and glass after trowelling 10cm of the mottled stained areas. Prehistoric flakes were also found within the historic fill deposit. Sandstone fragments within the amorphous stains were friable and burned and were mixed with sand, some cinder, and historic and prehistoric artifacts. Mr. Hatch told us when he was grading the lowest part of the pond (about 10meters south of where the dam will be located) he noted a rock wall perpendicular to the spring (E-W trending). The rock wall was most likely a dam to pond the spring in the early and mid-19th Century. The stains with historic debris (ceramics, glass, other) were located south of where Mr. Hatch found the rock wall. The debris was likely used as fill along the edge of the ponded area and stream/spring outlet. The Johnson family is in the process of documenting the point collections (Ben expressed interest in doing this). The history of the John-

A class of 36 Montessori School children visited the Johnson Farm and enjoyed pears in 1986.

son occupation of the farm is well known but earlier features also exist that probably relate to the John Rieff ca 1840s occupation. The historic fill material located in the pond construction area was likely dumped there in the mid to late 19th Century (ca 1840-1875 or later). The stains occurred approximately 20cm below present ground surface on a sloping grade 15m NW of where the spring now surfaces. The purpose of the fill was likely to elevate the ponded banks to reduce erosion and to fill in low areas around the ponded spring (early bank stabilization).

Additional artifacts found included one Johnson point, other biface fragments, hand-painted floral whiteware, and burned glass. Through this analysis, we know that the Johnson pond, which still exists today, is the second pond to have been built at that location (the first possibly being constructed by the Rieffs).

1990s-2010s: A History of Welcome and Education

The farm is no longer a "working farm." But it often plays host to various groups of visitors.

In 1986, a class of 36 Montessori School children came to the Johnson Farm on a field trip so that students could gather pears, pet a goat, enjoy nature, and learn together in the orchard. Later, other students also learned about beavers when one was trapped while making its home in the springhouse, and taken by a teacher to show students! University students have done research related to soil health, water quality, and other topics using the farm to gather samples for analysis. One student did his master's thesis on the skinks which live in the historic rock wall, and another student wrote his master's thesis on the orchard soil.

Non-profits have been active here, too. The Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Fayetteville came to visit the farm on several occasions and enjoyed boating on the pond, picnics, and sledding in the snow upon the open hilly fields where orchards once stood. The Ozark Society has hosted nature hikes at the farm. The Native Plant Society has brought wildflower lovers to come identify beautiful native plants

growing here. The Audubon Society regularly hosts the Christmas Bird Count at the farm (and many other locales) when ornithologists and lay volunteers come to count birds and enjoy refreshments. They have now become part of the farmhouse history. "This radiator in the kitchen is where Joe Neal [co-author of *Arkansas Birds, Their Distribution and Abundance*] once sat!" recalls Anne Prichard. In these ways, history happens every day. Washington County residents are shaping that history together.

In 1991, Anne commissioned local artist Mayme Ferguson to paint a most marvelous picture of the Johnson Barn, which had just been placed on the National Register of Historic Places the year before. The painting was to be a birthday present for her father, B3, who had helped design and build the barn in 1933. Sadly, B3 passed away on April 24, 1991, just before his 90th birthday and before he ever saw the painting. In his obituary, the family requested memorial donations be made to the Fayetteville Farmer's Market.

On May 16, 1992, Anne married Robert E. Prichard, or "Bob." They had several happy years together in Fayetteville and continued looking after the Johnson Farm. Bob was elected to the Fayetteville City Council in 1994, but passed away on March 9, 1995. After his death, Anne returned to the farm to live full-time.

B4 died on September 11, 2011. Like the generations before him, his funeral service was held at the Rieff's Chapel Cemetery on the Johnson Farm. He was the last active orchardist in the family. However, his two remaining orchards have gone wild and still produce pears on good years. The wildlife seem to appreciate B4's conservation legacy! His sister Anne continues that legacy as the steward of the farm today.

The Johnson Farm Today

Kessler Mountain has long been under the protection of enthusiastic hikers, mountain bikers, teachers, property owners, and area non-profit organizations. The new Kessler Mountain Regional Park, Outdoor Classroom and Nature Center, and the City of Fayetteville's 384-acre Kessler Mountain Reserve (protected through a Conservation Easement held by the Northwest Arkansas Land Trust)

The 1933 Johnson Barn as shown in a 2017 photograph.

all demonstrate broad interest and excitement for recreation, conservation, and education here. The Historic Johnson Farm is finally taking its rightful place under the umbrella of protected Kessler properties that cannot be demolished or destroyed.

In December 2016, Anne and her son Tim placed a Conservation Easement, held by the Northwest Arkansas Land Trust, on the remaining 168-acre farm as well as nearby Round Top Mountain. The land trust articulated many reasons why the property deserves protection. From their website:

> It is highly ranked in the Open Space Plan for Benton and Washington Counties due to its cultural, historic, wildlife, scenic and water quality values. Partially located in both the Illinois River and White River Watersheds, a spring-fed pond on the property serves as the headwaters of Cato Springs Branch, a tributary of the West Fork of the White River which feeds into Beaver Lake. Land trust partner, Beaver Water District, contributed steward-

ship funding in support of the project, helping to enable the conservation of this land for the protection of water quality in Beaver Lake, the drinking-water source for more than 450,000 residents in Northwest Arkansas.

In addition to the ecological services the farm provides, the farmhouse, outbuildings and orchards are being nominated in 2019 to the National Register of Historic Places as a District. The Rieff's Chapel Cemetery may be nominated in the future for the Arkansas Register as a separate entity. Holly Hope of the Arkansas Historic Preservation Program is preparing the nomination for the farm as a District. As of 2017, she was focused on the role the farm played in the fruit industry during the Johnson ownership.[44] The farm continues to be under the stewardship of the Johnson family, as it has been for 110 years as of November 2018. Thanks to the actions of many generations of farmers and conservationists, the Historic Johnson Farm has the best possible chance of surviving well into the future.

Editor's note: Part I of *The Historic Johnson Farm* appeared in the Winter 2018 issue of *Flashback.*

ENDNOTES

[39]Original document, "Diary of B.F. Johnson II," Johnson Family Papers, 1920-1924.

[40]National Register of Historic Places Listings, National Park Service, June 21, 1990.

[41]PBS AETN. "Back Road Barns." Aired Fall 2016.

[42]"B. F. Johnson Dies in Florida," *Fayetteville Daily Democrat*, January 19, 1932; p.1.

[43]Anne Dallett, "One Family's First Fayetteville Christmas," Northwest Arkansas Times, December 18, 1988.

[44]Interview with Holly Hope, Special Projects Historian, Arkansas Historic Preservation Program, Department of Arkansas Heritage. Also, email from James Gabbert, National Register of Historic Places, December 2017

Washington County Historical Society
announces
Annual Competition for Articles on History of Washington County

The Washington County Historical Society announces the tenth annual competition for the Walter J. Lemke Prize and the Lessie Stringfellow Read Prize with a call for submissions.

Topics can address any aspect of Washington County history, including archeology, lives of individuals, or records of institutions, and can be set in any time period. Both professional and amateur historians are invited to submit articles.

A $250 prize is offered in each of two categories: the Walter J. Lemke Prize for best article on Washington County history, with a preference given to subjects outside Fayetteville; and the Lessie Stringfellow Read Prize, with preference given for the best article about Fayetteville. Winners will be recognized at the society's annual meeting in October.

Manuscripts will be judged on contribution to the expansion of the county's history; originality of the subject; and use of primary and secondary sources. Manuscripts must be original material, and not previously published; they must be typed, preferably include endnotes, and have a maximum length of 40 pages, not inclusive of endnotes. The title page should be headed: "WCHS Prize," followed by the manuscript's full title, and the author's name, mailing address, telephone number, and email.

Entries become the property of the Washington County Historical Society and will not be returned. All submissions will be considered for publication in *Flashback*. WCHS reserves the right to award one or no prizes.

All submissions for both prizes will be deposited in the Special Collections Department of the University of Arkansas Libraries. Mail submissions to Lemke Prize, Washington County Historical Society, 118 E. Dickson Street, Fayetteville, AR 72701. Alternatively, submissions - as well as any questions - can be emailed to Patsy Watkins at pwatkins@uark.edu by June 30, 2019.

Flashback Editors Through the Years

By J. B. Hogan

The *Flashback* journal has been a part of the Washington County Historical Society (WCHS) since its beginning in 1951. In that nearly seventy-year span, many outstanding editors have worked on the organization's printed "voice." From Walter Lemke to Jean and Keith Newhouse, from Pat Donat to Tim Nutt and Charlie Alison, and now Patsy Watkins, *Flashback* has provided decades of continuous historical material for its readership.

The Lemke Years: 1951-1968

What more can one say about Professor Walter J. Lemke than has already been said? He founded the journalism school at the University of Arkansas, wrote articles and columns for many years for the *Fayetteville Daily Democrat/Northwest Arkansas Times*, and was the driving force behind the founding of the WCHS. His accomplishments were and remain legion. He was editor of *Flashback* from the beginning of the WCHS in early 1951 until his passing in December 1968. He was working on *Flashback* right up until his death.

The Lemke *Flashback* years are remarkable in the breadth and depth of coverage of local history. Using mimeograph machines to print the journal, "Uncle Walt" put out six issues a year from 1951 to 1958. He first made it a quarterly in 1959. From its inception until after Lemke was gone, *Flashback* was full-page size (8 1/2 by 11 inches) with some forty pages or more–fifty- and sixty-page issues were not uncommon–of historical and genealogical information.

J. B. Hogan is a local historian and author who has published over 260 stories and poems and 9 books. He is a frequent contributor to Flashback.

The early years included reports of visits to numerous historical locations in Washington County, large numbers of cemeteries listings with names of families interred there, family genealogies, and often anecdotal history articles. Walter Lemke's legacy is extensive, impressive, and invaluable. He is buried in Fayetteville's historic Evergreen Cemetery.

Transition: Post-Lemke Years: 1968-1973

Following the death of Professor Lemke, there was a period of transition at *Flashback*. Given Lemke's long reign as editor that would not be unexpected. Deane Carter finished up the last issue of 1968. Then the following year Lemke's former student, and a very successful newspaper man himself, Ernie Deane took over editing duties of *Flashback*.

Deane was followed by Lemke's old friend and longtime WCHS officer and board member Tom Feathers. Feathers had been with the WCHS from the beginning and had written a number of articles in *Flashback* himself.

For the next two years, 1971-1973, Dorris Hendrickson served as editor and her staff was

(Top) Walter J. Lemke (1948) Picture Collection, number 519. Special Collections, University of Arkansas Libraries, Fayetteville.
(Below) Ernie Deane whittling at home, Fayetteville, August 11, 1975. Charles Bickford, photographer. Courtesy Northwest Arkansas Democrat-Gazette & Shiloh Museum of Ozark History / Springdale News Collection (SN 8-11-1975)

extraordinary. Floyd Carl, Jr., venerable newsman with the *Fayetteville Daily Democrat/Northwest Arkansas Times*, and Pat Donat, long-time reporter for the *Times* whose articles frequently touched on local history, were both listed as Staff Members. The third person helping Hendrickson was Jean Newhouse, listed as Assistant Editor and about to embark on a twenty-plus year involvement, with her husband Keith, in editing *Flashback*.

It was during this phase that the journal itself went through a period of transition as well. Continuing as a quarterly, the format and appearance changed, and there was the beginning of a shift away from anecdotal stories and genealogy toward researched history articles. Beginning with the May 1972 issue, *Flashback* was no longer printed on mimeograph machines. It took on "an entirely new look."[1]

It was now "a printed booklet," editor Hendrickson explained in a page one notice entitled "*Flashback* Gets New Look." In addition, the journal was now a smaller, compact size in order to provide "greater economy in printing." Due to constraints approved by the Board of Directors earlier in the year, the journal would be "restricted to approximately 50 pages per issue to keep within the printing budget." [2]

Jean and Keith Newhouse Era: 1973-1995

Beginning in 1973 and lasting over twenty years until 1995, Jean and Keith Newhouse were the primary editors of *Flashback* – a remarkable length of time. Individually and together, the Newhouses presided over two decades of historical information presented to the local community.

With Jean Newhouse at the helm, *Flashback* won the Arkansas Historical Association (AHA) Walter L. Brown Award for the best county or local journal for 1975[3] and 1977.[4] In addition, with Jean and Keith as editors, *Flashback* won the Walter L. Brown Award for best use of graphics for 1983.[5] Articles in *Flashback* also won AHA awards for 1982,[6] 1983,[7] and 1984.[8]

During the Newhouse years, *Flashback* continued the new professional look of the smaller journal. Covers nearly always had entertaining images or photographs and, as early as 1975, researched articles found a home as well. By the 1990s, most articles were supported by solid research and featured endnotes to back up source material.

There were other editors during the Newhouse era, including

some familiar names. Ellen Compton Shipley, long connected with the WCHS and later an author of a book on Fayetteville history,[9] was editor from February 1979 until May 1981. She was followed by Ronald G. Foldvary. A *Flashback* article also won an AHA award in 1980[10] with Shipley and Foldvary listed as editors.

Otherwise it was a mostly Newhouse production at *Flashback*, with Keith as editor from 1985-1994. For 1994, Thomas E. Jordon took a turn at the helm, then Keith Newhouse edited one last time in 1995.

In 2000, just five years later, Keith Newhouse, a lieutenant in the U. S. Army during World War II, passed. He was buried in Fayetteville's National Cemetery at the south end of Government Avenue. Jean passed in 2012 at the age of 98 and is buried by her husband.

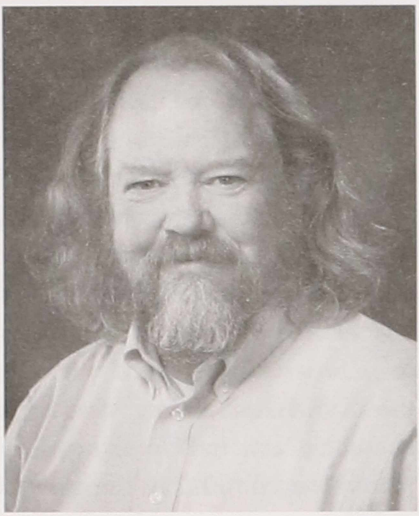
End of Century: 1996-2000

From 1996 through 2000, with the exception of a short span in late 1997 and early 1998 when Rick Buckelew held the position (poor health caused him to step down), Don E. Schaefer was *Flashback* editor. For 2000, under Schaefer's guidance, *Flashback* again won the AHA Walter L. Brown Award for the best county or local journal.[11]

Schaefer, originally from Searcy, Arkansas, worked at the University of Arkansas Division of Information, retiring in 1995. He served in the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers and was a captain in the Army ROTC. He passed on February 15, 2018, and is buried at the National Cemetery in Fayetteville.

The New Century: 2001-Present

Since 2001, there have been five *Flashback* editors. Scott Van Laningham, former president and CEO, as well as executive director of the Northwest Arkansas Regional Airport, additionally brought years of journalism experience to his term as editor, having worked for *The Springdale News* and the *Arkansas Gazette*. Gretchen Gearhart served as *Flashback* editor from 2002 until 2006. Gearhart graduated from the University of Arkansas in 1983 with a Bachelor of Arts degree and worked as an assistant editor and business manager for the AHA as well. Gearhart's assistant editor from 2005 to 2006 was noted local historian and author Tony Wappel.



Former *Flashback* editors, Timothy Nutt (left) and Charles Alison. Photographs courtesy of the University of Arkansas, Fayetteville.

Tim Nutt became *Flashback* editor in 2006. Previously, he served as editor of the *Pulaski County Review* and as president of the Arkansas Historical Association. He was in the University of Arkansas University Libraries Special Collections for many years, eventually becoming head of the department. He is also the co-author of an annotated bibliography of Arkansas history and a history of the University of Arkansas.[12] Currently, he is the director of the Historical Research Center at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences in Little Rock.

For 2006, early in Nutt's tenure, *Flashback* again won the AHA Walter L. Brown Award for the best county or local journal.[13] And in 2008, the first annual Walter J. Lemke Prize was awarded for the best article to appear annually in *Flashback*. The winner of the initial Lemke Prize was local historian and cemetery expert Abby Burnett.

Charles Alison, executive editor in the Office of University Relations, University of Arkansas, took over as *Flashback* editor in 2011. Before joining the university in 2004, Alison had a long career as a journalist for *The Springdale News* and its successors. He has authored two books about Fayetteville history[14] and is working on a history of the University of Arkansas.

During Alison's editorship, in 2013, the annual *Flashback* writ-

ing awards expanded to include two prizes: the Walter J. Lemke Prize "for best article about Washington County History with preference given for subjects outside of Fayetteville" and the Lessie Stringfellow Read Prize, "with preference given for best article about Fayetteville." Winners are recognized at the October annual meeting of the WCHS. The two most recent honorees, for 2018, were Denele Campbell, Walter J. Lemke Prize, and Amanda Bancroft, Lessie Stringfellow Read Prize.

At the WCHS Annual Meeting in October 2018, Patsy Watkins was confirmed as the next editor of *Flashback*. Watkins recently retired from the University of Arkansas where she was a long-time professor in and former chair of the journalism department. She is the author of a book compiling historic photographs of Arkansas by the Depression Era Farm Security Administration.[15] The latest in a long, distinguished line of *Flashback* editors, Watkins is tasked with continuing the WCHS stated mission "to record and preserve the history of Washington County Arkansas."

Flashback Editors – 1951-Present

Walter J. Lemke	May 1951[16] - August 1968
Deane G. Carter	November 1968
Ernie Deane	February 1969 - February 1970
Tom Feathers	May 1970 - November 1970
Dorris Hendrickson	February 1971 - May 1973
Floyd Carl, Jr., Staff Member	February 1971 - November 1971[17]
Pat Donat, Staff Member	February 1971 - November 1971[18]
Jean Newhouse, Asst. Editor	February 1973 - May 1973
Jean Newhouse	August 1973 - November 1974
Mrs. Keith Newhouse	February 1975 - November 1978[19]
Ellen Shipley, Asst. Editor	February 1978 - November 1978
Ellen Shipley	February 1979 - May 1981
Ronald G. Foldvary	August 1981- November 1981
Jean & Keith Newhouse	February 1982 - November 1984
Keith Newhouse	February 1985 - November 1991
Keith Newhouse, Senior Editor	February 1992 - November 1994

Beverlee Nelson, Asst. Editor	February 1992 - November 1992
Thomas E. Jordon, Asst. Editor	February 1993 - November 1993
Thomas E. Jordon, Sr. Editor	February 1994 - May 1994
Keith Newhouse, Asst. Editor	February 1994 - May 1994
Thomas E. Jordon	August 1994 - November 1994
Keith Newhouse, Editor-in-Chief	February 1995 - November 1995
Don. E. Schaefer, Associate Editor	May 1995 - November 1995
Don. E. Schaefer, Editor-in-Chief	February 1996 - August 1997
Rick Buckelew, Editor-in-Chief	November 1997 - February 1998
Don E. Schaefer, *Flashback* Editor	February 1998 - November 2000[20]
Scott Van Laningham, *Flashback* Editor	February 2001 - Spring 2002
Gretchen Gearhart, *Flashback* Editor	Summer 2002 - Autumn 2006
Tony Wappel, Asst. Editor	Summer 2005 - Summer 2006
Timothy G. Nutt, *Flashback* Editor	2006 - 2011
Charles Alison, *Flashback* Editor	2011 - 2018
Patsy Watkins, *Flashback* Editor	2018-present

Endnotes

[1]*Flashback*, Volume 22, Number 2, May 1972, p. 1.

[2]Ibid.

[3]*Arkansas Historical Quarterly*, Volume XXXV, Number 3, Autumn, 1976, p. 294.

[4]Ibid., Volume XXXVII, Number 4, Winter, 1978, p. 356.

[5]Ibid., Volume XLIII, Number 4, Winter 1984, p. 311.

[6]Ibid., Volume XLII, Number 4, Winter 1983, p. 357.

[7]Ibid., Volume XLIII, Number 4, Winter 1984, p. 311.

[8]Ibid., Volume XLIV, Number 4, Winter 1985, p. 338.

[9]Alison, Charles Y. and Compton, Ellen K., *Images of America: Fayetteville*, Arcadia Publishing, Charleston, South Carolina, 2011.

[10]*Arkansas Historical Quarterly*, Volume XL, Number 3, Autumn 1981, p. 263.

[11]Ibid., Volume LX, Number 2, Summer 2001, p. 238.

[12]Allen, Amy Leigh and Nutt, Timothy G., *University of Arkansas*, Arcadia Publishing,

Charleston, South Carolina, 2015.

[13]*Arkansas Historical Quarterly*, Volume LXVI, Number 2, Summer 2007, pp. 284-285.

[14]Alison, Charles Y. and Compton, Ellen K., *Images of America: Fayetteville*, Arcadia Publishing, Charleston, South Carolina, 2011; and Alison, Charles Y., *A Brief History of Fayetteville Arkansas*, The History Press, Charleston, South Carolina, 2017.

[15]Watkins, Patsy, *It's All Done Gone: Arkansas Photographs from the Farm Security Administration, 1936-1943*, the University of Arkansas Press, Fayetteville, Arkansas, 2018.

[16]This is the official date Walter J. Lemke became editor. The first *Flashback* issue actually appeared in March 1951.

[17]Unknown if on staff in 1972.

[18]Unknown if on staff in 1972.

[19]Dropped her first name, Jean, at this point.

[20]Rick Buckelew had to resign in late April because of health reasons. He had been elected as editor for 1998. The May issue mailed late as a result.

Rieff House: From a Home to a Funeral Home

By David Edmark

A casual glance at Moore's Chapel, the long established funeral home on Fayetteville's West Center Street at the edge of downtown, doesn't reveal much of the property's history dating to the city's earliest days. One would need to stop and look closely at the plaque on the building that offers a short chronology.

That would reveal the property's first appearance on land records in 1834, just six years after Fayetteville's founding. The plaque tells that the land was granted that year to Washington County for a courthouse by an act of Congress signed by President Andrew Jackson. The next year the city was surveyed and by 1837 the land was divided into lots. This parcel was Lots 5, 6 and 7 of Block 18 and was sold to the highest bidder, James W. Sweeny, for $36.[1]

For the next 20 years the property changed hands multiple times. Charles P. Town, publisher of Fayetteville's first newspaper, *The Witness*, owned the property in 1840.[2] Jonas Tebbetts, who would later build what's now known as Headquarters House a few blocks away, also held the property during this period.[3] Judge David Walker, a local pioneer who owned a two-story brick house on other side of Center Street that still stands today, briefly owned Lots 5 and 6 in the 1850s. Stokeley D.M. Wilson owned Lot 7. In 1855 and 1857, Henry Rieff bought the lots from Walker and Wilson.[4]

Rieff's purchase would prove to be significant. He built his home of hand-made bricks and timbers there in 1857.[5]

"It was a colonial red brick, two-story, not unlike the Stone

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(Top) A mid-20th century photograph shows the Henry Rieff House, Fayetteville. Courtesy Shiloh Museum of Ozark History / Washington County Historical Society Collection (P-2656)
(Above) Moore's Chapel as it appears in January 2019, at 206 W. Center, more than 160 years after the original structure was built. Photo by David Edmark

house just across the street," recalled Jobelle Holcombe in her speech at the Moore's Chapel plaque dedication in 1951. (Her father Joseph Holcomb, who in 1878 would become the first mayor of Springdale, bought the house from Rieff in 1873.) "At each end was a fireplace, with two large front rooms separated by a hallway leading to an L in the rear extending to the north. In the rear were a well and well house, perhaps two wells, and servant quarters. Nothing remains of these quarters. Old deeds showed that Henry Rieff owned slaves."[6] [Jobelle and her father Joseph used different spellings for their last name. The explanation for this is not known.]

The Rieff house soon became a social center with Henry and his wife, Sallie, known locally as gracious hosts. But their new home also became part of the setting of momentous events around them as the Civil War worked its way into Fayetteville. Rieff became a colonel in the Confederate army, but he could have seen some battle action had he simply stayed home.

The house was used as a Confederate commissary by the army in 1862. There is some uncertainty whether the house was actually hit by artillery fire, although Walter Lemke presumed it was from his research. "I cannot prove that the Rieff house was hit by artillery fire, but I am certain that the old Stone house across the street sustained a direct hit," Lemke wrote in a 1951 Flashback article. "The place is still visible in the west wall. And the late Miss Amanda Stone told me that she (about 6 years old at the time) was on the stair landing when the cannonball pierced the wall of her parents' home. It is logical to assume that the Rieff house was hit during the same attack."

Lemke wrote that the house was, according to one story, struck during an attack on Fayetteville by Confederate Gen. James Hagan from cannon on Duncan Street hill and that a patched place in the Rieff house's west chimney seemed to bear that out.[7]

Lemke also noted that A.D Callison, who by 1951 was operating his funeral home at the former Rieff house, had found a cannonball buried in the yard during a remodeling project. He had been told that the house's post-Civil War owners kept it as a souvenir. Callison's granddaughter, Margaret Barron, recalled recently that she played with the cannonball in the home's fireplace as a child in the late 1940s.[8]

Rieff sold the house to Holcomb a year before his death in 1874. Holcomb sold the property to Dr. James W. Jones in 1876, who

deeded it to his brother, Theodore F. Jones, in 1883.[9]

The Jones family owned the house for the next few decades. It passed in 1924 upon Theodore Jones's death to his wife, Emma, and then to their four children.[10] The family owned the property through the 1930s but in 1932 a longtime local business moved its operations there. Telephone book listings indicate that Moore's Chapel, which was established in 1889 by J. Fred Moore, in the late 1920s had its facilities at 106 W. Center St., a block east of the Rieff house. Moore's Chapel first shows an address of 206. W. Center St. (Rieff house) in the 1932 directory while the property was still under Jones family ownership. A 1951 *Flashback* list of Fayetteville businesses in operation for at least 25 years said Moore's Chapel had been at its current location since 1932.[11]

Little is known about how the house made the transition from a family residence to a funeral parlor. A staffer at Moore's Chapel said its historical archives were borrowed more than 20 years ago and were not returned, leaving unavailable any detailed information as to how its characteristics made it suitable for conversion.

In 1941, the Moore's Chapel owners, A.D. and Margaret Callison, bought the property – Lots 5, 6, 7, and 8 of the city's original Block 18 -- from the Jones family. Ownership of the funeral business and property owners has changed over the years with the Callisons later selling it to Morton Carnes and Randall Roberts, who later sold it to Tommy C. Mills and Jim Garmon. The current owners, Scott and Paula Berna, bought it in 2010.[12]

The Callison remodeling that Lemke referenced in 1951 led to the revamped funeral home facility that is visible today to people driving around the western edge of downtown Fayetteville. Much of the original two-story house is still there framing technology that the Rieffs wouldn't comprehend and that would likely amaze the Joneses.

Endnotes

[1]Holcombe, Jobelle. "The Dedication of the Plaque on the Henry Rieff House," Flashback, November 1951, 5.

[2]"Block 18, Original Town of Fayetteville," Flashback, January 1964, 4.

[3]Lemke, W.J. Some Old Fayetteville Houses, 1951.

[4] "Block 18, Original Town of Fayetteville," Flashback, January 1964, 5.

[5] Lemke, W.J. Some Old Fayetteville Houses, 1951.

[6] Holcombe, Jobelle. 6.

[7] Lemke, W.J. "Bronze Plaque to Mark Old Rieff House," Flashback, June-July 1951, 24.

[8] Telephone interview with author, December 2018.

[9] Commemorative plaque at Moore's Chapel.

[10] Warranty deeds, Washington County, Ark., Assessor's Office.

[11]"In Business for a Quarter Century and Longer," Flashback, November 1951, 23.

[12]Our History, Moore's Chapel website, accessed Jan. 17, 2019, https://www.moores-funeralchapel.com/who-we-are/history.

Lelia Ruth Droke: Researching and Writing the First Master's Thesis at the University of Arkansas

By Charlie Alison

In the late 1800s, a young woman described as being "tender, unselfish, loving, considerate, brave" and having a "gentle disposition" arrived on the campus of Arkansas Industrial University. The young woman, Leila Ruth Droke, became the first student to research and write a master's thesis as partial fulfillment of the requirements for a master's degree at the university.[1]

Droke was born in November 1882 to George Wesley Droke and Cassandra Josephine Campbell Droke. Her mother died when she was 4 years old, and her father remarried the next year. Her father grew up near Bentonville and worked his way through school, eventually enrolling at Arkansas Industrial University in 1877 as a member of the junior class. He taught the next year as associate principal of the Shiloh Institute in Springdale and returned to the university in 1879, graduating with a Bachelor of Arts in 1880 and

Leila Droke, portrait from the 1906 UofA Cardinal yearbook

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a Master of Arts in 1884.[2]

Following his graduation, he was appointed an assistant in the university's Preparatory Department in October 1884, but the university's Board of Trustees dismissed the entire corps of faculty the next year. He taught school before being rehired in 1887. Droke climbed the ranks, becoming an adjunct professor and then associate professor of mathematics, logic, and astronomy in 1897 and eventually chair of the Department of Mathematics, and then also taking on the role of dean of the College of Arts and Sciences from 1915 to 1925 as well. He retired in 1929 at the age of 75.[3]

Leila Droke grew up in Fayetteville and attended the Fayetteville public schools through Grade 8 and then enrolled for the equivalent of high school classes in the university's Preparatory Department.

She started college-level classes at the age of 18, earning a Bachelor of Arts in 1903. She helped found the Arkansas chapter of the Zeta Tau Alpha sorority that same year and attended the sorority's

Burch Grabill photographed the university's German club, Deutscher Verein, for the 1906 edition of the Cardinal yearbook. Leila Droke is on the second row from the bottom, second person from the right. The group also included Dr. Joseph William Carr at the center of the image, who taught German and advised Droke on her thesis. The man with the mustache is professor Antonio Marinoni.

national conference when it was held on the University of Arkansas campus a couple of years later. After her graduation, she took a job teaching Latin and English at Springdale High School. Her story sounds not unlike the several hundred students who had by that time graduated from the university. After two years of teaching, though, she returned to the university to pursue graduate studies with the intention of attaining a master's degree.

Prior to 1900, the university had awarded master's degrees to students on a couple of occasions and at least two doctoral degrees to faculty members for their research in their respective fields of study. The first person to receive the Doctor of Philosophy was a professor named Francis LeRoy Harvey. He had earned his bachelor's and master's degrees at the Iowa Agricultural College and taught briefly before in Iowa before being elected to the chair of theoretical and applied chemistry and natural history at Arkansas Industrial University. Harvey identified numerous new plants and fossils that he found in Arkansas and published a book titled *Forest Trees of Arkansas*.

She studied her major subject, German, under Dr. Joseph William Carr, a professor who had graduated magna cum laude from Harvard and then earned a Master of Arts degree there as well. Carr studied for his doctorate at the University of Leipzig and eventually came to teach at Arkansas in 1901. In addition to his teaching duties, he also edited the university's catalog of studies. He was a member of the Modern Language Association and served as vice president of the American Dialect Society. He left the university to teach at the University of Maine just as Droke was finishing her thesis.[4]

Droke also studied graduate-level Latin and French under professors John Clinton Futrall and Antonio Marinoni, respectively. Futrall was better known in his later role as president of the university, but he had attended A.I.U. for two years before finishing his bachelor's and master's degrees at the University of Virginia. He returned to Arkansas 1894 as professor of Latin and became a very active faculty member prior to becoming president in 1913. Marinoni grew up in Italy but came to America in 1901, finishing a bachelor's degree by correspondence from Italy and then earning a master's degree from Yale. He taught briefly as an instructor at Columbia in 1904 before coming to the University of Arkansas as a professor and head of the Romance languages department.

For her thesis, Droke chose to translate "The Legend of Walther of Acquitaine" from the epic poem written during the 10th century by Ekkehard I, a Benedictine monk at the Abbey of St. Gall in Switzerland. Ekkehard based his Latin poem on an early German version of the tale. Droke, presumably, translated from a German version of the story, but she does not say whether she translated from the German or the Latin version in the introduction of her thesis.

A drawing from a medieval manuscript depicts Walter dueling with Hartunc.

Walther of Acquitaine was a fabled king of the Visigoths, whose battles and exploits against the Vandals appear in a variety of medieval texts, the earliest believed to be from the 10th or early 11th century. The story became popular in the cloisters across northern Europe, and the exploits of Walther were rewritten in a variety of medieval languages, recasting the mythic leader as "Walter," "Waldere," "Waltharius," and even the Polish "Walczerz." The locations and other characters in the tale also shifted depending on the ethnicity of the writer, but all the tales tell a similar story. A noble named Walther is held hostage by Attila. He falls in love with Hildegund, a fellow hostage. They escape with treasure and are pursued by Huns led by Gunther and Walter's old friend, Hagen. Walther fights duels with his pursuers, eventually killing Gunther and then dueling with Hagen until both are critically wounded and call a truce. Hildegund binds their wounds, and she and Waltherius cross the Rhine to the safety of their homeland.

Droke included an introduction about these threads of the Waltherian saga and then typed a narrative of her own translation of the tale, including notes at the end. She was awarded the Master of Arts in 1906, and her thesis is still held in the Special Collections of the

University Libraries.[5]

After being awarded the Master of Arts in 1906, Droke took a position teaching Latin at Little Rock High School. After the 1907-08 school year, she returned to her family's home in Fayetteville for summer vacation. In early September 1908, she and her sister, who was teaching at Galloway Female College in Searcy, planned a circuitous trip to Joplin to visit friends, then around to Searcy and finally to Little Rock to resume their respective teaching duties. They only got as far as Springdale, though, before Leila Droke fell ill with fever. The sisters canceled their trip and returned home. Droke remained ill at home for several days and died on Sept. 16, 1908.

"Perhaps no graduate of the State University was more deservedly popular than Miss Droke, and her death cast a gloom over the opening of the institution," wrote the *Arkansas Democrat*.[6]

Coincidentally, her German professor, Joseph William Carr, died five months later, collapsing while teaching a class at the University of Maine and expiring from internal injuries suffered during a fall a month earlier.

Endnotes

[1]University of Arkansas. *Arkansas Alumnus.* March 1940. Fayetteville, Ark: University of Arkansas. 8.

[2]Reynolds, John Hugh, and David Y. Thomas. 1910. *History of the University of Arkansas.* Fayetteville: University of Arkansas. 455-57.

[3]Ibid.; Hale, Harrison. 1948. *University of Arkansas, 1871-1948.* Fayetteville: Univ. of Arkansas Alumni Assn. 111-12.

[4]Reynolds, John Hugh. *History of the University of Arkansas.* 448-49.

[5]Droke, L.R. 1906. "The Legend of Walther of Aquitaine." The university's call number for the thesis is T 1906 D83L.

[6]"Sudden Death of Miss Droke," *Arkansas Democrat.* Sept. 17, 1908, 5.

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